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## THE OUTLOOK FOR MUNICIPAL EFFICIENCY IN PHILADELPHIA

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The mayoralty campaign of 1911 in Philadelphia was conducted, by both of the leading candidates, upon the platform of business economy and efficiency. There were charges of graft and corruption, and appeals to political regularity; but, in the main, the interest of voters was focused sharply upon administrative problems—business organization; the development of public works; the use of the city's credit; the protection of public health; the promotion of education; the purchase of supplies; the control of contract awards; the selection of efficient personnel for public service; the elimination of waste and inefficiency.

Hon. Rudolph Blankenburg, the successful candidate, made his appeal to the electorate of Philadelphia on the issue of "a clean, progressive, constructive administration." In the brief and trenchant "platform" which he issued as a campaign document, he laid stress on the following principles: "Only one favored contractor—the lowest possible bidder; one hundred cents return for every dollar expended; no illegal or wasteful use of city funds; current receipts must pay current expenses; new loans for permanent improvements; fitness, not party service, the first consideration for appointment to office; sound education, combined with moral, physical, and technical training for children. Commodious schools, healthy surroundings, ample playgrounds, and all attainable elements that will promote happiness and foster citizenship."

The principles embodied in this brief platform were reiterated, amplified, and given concrete interpretation during the progress of a campaign notable for its vigor and for its emphasis on community needs, community opportunities, and citizen responsibility, rather than for its appeal to personal prejudice and partisan motives. On the day following the election, the mayor-elect committed himself anew to a program of municipal efficiency by stating publicly:

"Every pledge I made in my campaign will be strictly carried out. The people know me, and they know that I will do as I say."

By explicit statement and by the whole tenor of his campaign appeal, therefore, the present mayor of Philadelphia has invited the community to look for that oft anticipated and seldom realized ideal—a well managed city government. Furthermore, the course pursued by the mayor during the first three months of his administration has still further confirmed the expectation and confidence which his pre-election pledges aroused. As heads of the municipal departments, he selected five men of rare administrative and business qualifications. Unhampered by political affiliations, each of these directors has a free hand, within his legal powers and financial resources, to conduct the affairs of his department in the interest of efficient public service. As a unit, these executive chiefs are committed to the mayor's program of business administration. Changes in the personnel of the municipal service, it is generally conceded, have been made in the interest of efficient service rather than of political advantage.

The present situation in Philadelphia, therefore, presents most of the factors commonly regarded as the necessary elements of an efficiency program. These are: first, a mayor of energy, intelligence, and unquestioned integrity; second, charter powers of unusual scope which make it possible for the mayor to exercise effective leadership in the management of the city; third, executive officials free to pursue their policies without the restraints of partisan political alliance; fourth, executive heads of departments of high ability, each free to administer the affairs of his department solely with a view to economy and efficiency of service; fifth, a civil service commission definitely committed to the "merit system" as the method of selecting municipal employees; sixth, the confidence and optimism of a large proportion of the substantial citizens of the community.

As commonly follows such an outcome of a "reform movement," the great majority of citizens who sincerely desire efficient municipal government in Philadelphia assume that these six factors will insure "good government" for four years, at least. They assume, furthermore, that having performed their functions as voters, little responsibility rests upon them, for the coming four years, but to enjoy a sense of civic virtue and security, and to applaud occasionally the achievements of their thoroughly competent officials.

So far as integrity, worthy intentions, and high ability of officials can insure good government, this confidence of citizens is doubtless well placed. The fallacy lies in the assumption that official integrity, purpose, and ability alone are a guarantee of efficient city management; that citizens have no part in municipal government between election times; that officials can and will work to the best advantage without the stimulus and support of an informed, alert and exacting citizenship.

A situation in many ways similar to that which now exists in Philadelphia occurred in New York in 1901 when, after a strenuous and exciting campaign, the people of that city elected Seth Low as their mayor. In a recent contribution to the *North American Review*, Mr. R. Fulton Cutting, who, as leader of the Citizens' Union, was largely responsible for the election of Mayor Low, makes the following significant comment upon the results of the Low administration:

"He brought to this high office capacity, integrity, industry, and wide experience. He selected subordinates for their specific qualifications and high character. The two years of his administration set a new standard of official morality, but in economy and efficiency it failed to realize public expectation. It was compelled to operate with a business system obsolete or framed to mislead rather than to enlighten the responsible officials. The great body of employees, largely protected by a civil service law and unsympathetic with reform, made no effort to hold up the hands of the department heads. These in turn, because responsible for the conduct of daily business and occupied with large policies, could not devote themselves to the reorganization of a force of fifty thousand unwilling employees. The wonder is that Mayor Low accomplished what he did in his short but memorable administration. His mayoralty, however, conclusively disclosed the insufficiency of reform by the ballot. The man without the machinery, animated by the noblest ambitions, is compelled to pursue them with an antiquated, rusty, unreliable mechanism that paralyzes progress."

In Philadelphia to-day, as in New York ten years ago, we have a group of officials facing administrative problems of great complexity and difficulty—handicapped by an administrative organization and methods of conducting business that make it all but impossible for these officials to satisfy the public expectation. It is as

if, in an age of rapid-fire guns and high explosives, an army of brave, strong men were sent forth to battle, equipped with blunderbusses and wet powder.

In most of the city departments and bureaus, the organization is such that newly appointed administrative officers find it difficult or impossible to ascertain the exact powers and duties of the several units in the organization. Clear definitions of functions and authority do not exist; and until the official, by a long and tedious process of direct experience, has become familiar with the organization with which he is expected to work, he is not in position to readjust functions, to do away with conflicts and inconsistencies, to centralize and definitely locate responsibility, and to place each officer and employee in position to render his most effective service. And, by the time an administrative officer has become familiar with the problems involved in a reorganization of his office, he may have reached the close of his term of office, only to pass on to his successor the same handicap of defective organization which he himself inherited.

Commenting on the organization of one of the most important bureaus of the city government, one of the recently appointed departmental directors in a letter to the Bureau of Municipal Research says: "I find this bureau in a very demoralized condition, and absolutely lacking the primary elements of an organization. There is no one part of its work, as I found it, that even approximates a satisfactory condition. We now wish to get down to the details of work and provide something like system. Not having any available material to help me in this work, I find it necessary to solicit outside help, and will greatly appreciate the favor if you can see your way clear to assist me in the matter suggested."

Assuming, then, the great advantage of "good men" in office, the outlook for municipal efficiency depends first upon the extent to which the details of organization—of the division, distribution, and co-ordination of functions—can be studied and the results utilized in reframing the functional structure of the municipal departments, bureaus, divisions and offices. A second element, of like importance, is the need for efficient methods of performing the various functions for which the municipal organization is constituted.

Administrative officers in Philadelphia, as elsewhere, are handicapped by archaic methods of doing work that have long since been

discarded in well managed private business. Tax rolls are laboriously copied by hand in triplicate, instead of by typewriters and carbon process. Bills for taxes and water service are deliberately written out "while you wait," instead of pre-billed and filed for instant reference. Highly paid officials spend time in signing individual vouchers, pay rolls, and warrants, instead of having such documents listed on schedules that will permit of a single signature where the entire list is to be approved. Each department or office employs a different classification of appropriation and expenditure items, which makes impossible a compact summary statement of the city's financial transactions showing functions performed and cost incurred for each function. Methods of carrying on milk inspection, tenement house inspection, and medical inspection of school children, make it difficult for officials or citizens to see clearly the results or the cost of work undertaken, or work done. Methods of preparing financial estimates, of considering these estimates, of formulating and voting the annual budget of appropriations make it impossible for citizens, taxpayers, or officials themselves to get a clear picture of the financial and social program which the budget is assumed to embody, and to exercise their best judgment as to the relative values of proposed items of expenditure.

Efficient management obviously depends upon accurate, complete and prompt information; making available to the administrative officer in usable form the details of past experience, of present activity and of proposed plans. The most serious obstacle to an efficiency program in Philadelphia is the lack of concrete facts as a basis for judgment. The Chief of the Bureau of Highways finds it impossible without special and costly inquiry, to get such simple facts as the number of miles of paved streets, the extent of repair work urgently needed, or a list of highways which contractors have agreed to keep in repair for a specified time. The Director of Public Safety finds it impossible to determine precisely what duties are performed by the various divisions of the police force, what work is being done to prevent fires, or what functions are performed by the electrical bureau. The Director of Public Health has no ready means of determining what number of those defects found by medical inspectors among school children have been corrected; the cost of service in the general hospital; or the number of babies born during a given year. The mayor cannot possibly ascertain at any desired

time what the city owns and what it owes, what funds from revenues and from loans will probably be available during his administration, or what specific economies may reasonably be anticipated in his program for reducing operative costs.

Potentially, the most important source of information as well as the most effective instrument of financial control is the city budget. A single typical item from the financial estimates of Philadelphia for 1912 illustrates the obstacles which indefinite, unanalyzed, and therefore unintelligible financial statements offer to open-eyed, efficient management. Item 20, of the estimate of the Bureau of Highways and Street Cleaning reads as follows: "For repairing, altering, and extending sewers and inlets, trapping and etrapping inlets, and cleaning sewers, \$75,000."

It is obviously impossible to determine from this statement what part of the \$75,000 is requested for the various kinds of work named; to determine whether the proposed work is to be done by contract or by direct labor; and if by direct labor whether the amount named is to cover labor or materials or both. On inquiry and analysis, the item breaks up into the following elements:

Foremen, five at \$1,200.....	\$6,000
Sewer constructor.....	1,500
Bricklayers, four at \$5 per day (303 days).....	6,060
Laborers, at \$2 per day (6,070 days).....	12,140
Driver with team and vehicle at \$6 per day (1,600 days),	9,600
Contract work.....	39,700
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	\$75,000

Within this single item then, as it originally stood, are included requests for salaries, wages of regular employees, wages of temporary employees, and work on contract.

Ambiguity similar to this in many items; lack of uniform classification as to "objects of expenditure" in the estimates and appropriations; absence of any satisfactory and consistent grouping of items under such functional headings as "administration," "inspection," "operation," "maintenance," and "construction;" and unsatisfactory typographical arrangement seriously limit the important purposes which the Philadelphia budget might serve. It is, in fact, not uncommonly regarded as a grab-bag of individual and unrelated appropriation items. It cannot be summarized in such a way as to

focus the attention of citizens, executive officials, or councils on the city's program as a whole as well as upon details of the program. Thus, in many ways, the budget obstructs rather than facilitates the consideration of questions of municipal policy and stands between the community and its responsibility for deciding what it will do through the municipal government, to protect and promote the welfare of 1,500,000 citizens whose interests are at stake.

Such defects in organization and administrative methods as those described are, of course, not peculiar to Philadelphia. They are not limited by latitude, longitude, or climate; but are found in all cities where force has not yet broken down the fallacious notion that for some mysterious reason municipal business methods must differ from methods in well administered private business.

The purpose of directing attention to these defects is not to suggest a pessimistic outlook for municipal efficiency. It is rather to suggest the futility of a vague, uncritical confidence that does not face squarely the details of constructive work involved in any real efficiency program; and to suggest also the unreasonableness of much of the criticism aimed at officials who, because of inadequate machinery and slovenly methods inherited from the past, fail to satisfy the demands of well meaning but uninformed citizens.

Philadelphia officials clearly realize that the measure of their achievement is to be the success with which they meet specific problems and that success depends, in large measure, upon the intelligent support of citizens. The mayor has asked and is receiving the co-operation of volunteer citizen commissions. Departmental officers are seeking expert advice and service wherever it is available. Civic and philanthropic bodies having proposals backed by facts are encouraged and invited to co-operate with the government in the study of community needs and the solution of community problems.

Assuming, then, that the chief obstacle to a municipal efficiency program lies not in unwilling or incompetent officials but in defective administrative machinery; and assuming also the readiness of officials to accept intelligent criticism and co-operation, the main burden of responsibility for continued failure rests upon citizens rather than upon officials.

The varying fortunes of political parties and of individual



office holders make it difficult and uncertain, even for an officer of clear purpose and high ability, to work out a progressive and continuous program for the improvement of a public office. An independent citizens' organization, on the other hand, having a permanent and continuous program, is able to gather up the results of policies and methods pursued under successive administrations, and in various departments; to subject these to critical analysis and comparison; to establish administrative standards; and to make these available to an officer at the threshold of his term of office, as a basis for a prompt and clear understanding of his administrative problems and of the methods best adapted to their solution.

This is precisely the program of municipal research. During three years, the Bureau of Municipal Research of Philadelphia has worked in constant and active co-operation with city officials, including the mayor, the controller, the Board of Education, the chiefs of the numerous bureaus and the directors of most of the city departments. Muck-raking has been no part of the Bureau's program, although facts, even when disagreeable or discreditable, have been impartially laid bare to officials.

In his paper on Philadelphia's accounting system,<sup>1</sup> Controller Walton describes the reorganization of the city's accounting system which was undertaken with the co-operation of the Bureau of Municipal Research.

The city now has the central core of an accounting system that will stand comparison with that of any modern industrial or commercial enterprise. Important steps have been taken which enable the Controller, through compactly formulated balance sheets, to exhibit currently the city's assets and liabilities; its revenues and expenses; and the condition of each fund with respect to balances available for appropriation, reserves set aside for contracts, and unexpended balances. In connection with this accounting revision, an inventory of the city's properties was taken for the first time; over \$250,000,000 of city property being placed on the Controller's books, and provision made for current additions and withdrawals necessary to keep the inventory up to date. Statements in separate balance sheets showing assets and liabilities that apply to the city's current operations, and those that apply to capital operations involving the acquisition of permanent properties, enable the official or taxpayer

<sup>1</sup>See page 64.

to see at a glance the financial results of these two distinct classes of transactions.

The Controller is now planning, with the co-operation of the Bureau of Municipal Research, to extend this system of accounts into all departments of the city government and thus to bring under central accounting control the current transactions of every department from the time liabilities are first incurred to the time they are finally discharged; and to give similar control over miscellaneous revenues as they accrue. Such a system of accounts, by furnishing currently, promptly and exactly the important details concerning the city's business, not only gives the Controller the means of effective control over receipts and expenditures, revenues and expenses, properties and liabilities; but, by providing the basis for properly classified and summarized information regarding the cost of every municipal department, activity or enterprise, the completed system of accounts will furnish the only safe starting point for a municipal program of economy and efficiency. It will make it possible for administrative officers and citizens to apply fact-standards in place of opinion-standards in the consideration of municipal problems.

Standardization of medical inspection methods has enabled the Bureau of Health to get physical defects of school children corrected, where formerly they were only reported and registered. Standardization of school census methods has given the Board of Education accurate information in place of unreliable guesses as to what children should be in school and what children are actually there; and, incidentally, by giving an accurate census, increased by \$75,000 per annum the city's portion of state school funds.

A study of the milk inspection service of the Bureau of Health resulted in radical changes in method, more stringent standards of temperature and cleanliness, and a marked improvement in the milk supply of the city. Closely related to this was the establishment of the division of child hygiene, with its corps of visiting nurses; the opening of outdoor hospitals and milk stations on recreation piers; the report of the mayor's milk commission; the holding of the milk show; the opening of the Babies' Hospital; and the reduction, by thirty per cent, in the deaths of infants under one year old in Philadelphia—a saving of 1,110 infant lives in the first eight months of 1911.

An investigation of weights and measures disclosed the utter

lack of municipal control and a tremendous loss to citizens through short measure; laid the foundation for an effective state law; and opened the way for municipal supervision of weights and measures.

A co-operative study with the department of supplies has brought out the vagueness and the ambiguity of specifications which has discouraged competition and made possible favoritism. A beginning has been made of standardization of specifications which will eventually result in immense financial saving to the city.

An investigation of business method of the Bureau of Charities showed that the city was being systematically defrauded and the inmates of the charitable institutions furnished with food and other supplies of definitely low grade. Conflicts in authority, ill-defined responsibility, and other serious defects of organization were shown to exist; and the plan under way for developing the city's charitable institutions shown to be ill considered, inadequate and wasteful. Plans for reorganization were submitted and are now being worked out by the director through a newly appointed superintendent.

A revision of the financial estimates of all city departments for 1912 was formulated as a tentative basis for a city budget that will lend itself more readily to intelligent consideration by councils, the mayor, citizens, taxpayers and the public press. The items in the estimates of all departments were reclassified on a uniform basis; each item being made so definite that its purpose is unmistakable, and the way thus opened for the adoption of a budget that shall present a well defined financial and social program for the community and an instrument of effective financial control in the hands of councils and the city controller. The mayor, his department heads, the controller and many members of councils have given their approval to the proposed financial plan, and there is strong assurance that it will be put in operation next year.

By far the greater part of the information obtained in such investigations has been submitted confidentially to officials without publication. It has been found that the co-operation of officials might best be enlisted in this way. Officials have uniformly shown a willingness to use the information and constructive suggestions thus submitted, for correcting defects in administrative methods. The Bureau of Municipal Research has assumed that the public official should be permitted to take credit for measures intended to raise the efficiency of the public service, rather than be subjected

to public criticism for waste, inefficiency and infidelity due to un-businesslike organization and methods.

Shortly before the close of the recent mayoralty campaign the Bureau of Municipal Research submitted to each of the nominees a series of proposals as to definite steps which its study of the business management of the city has shown to be possible and desirable. It was suggested that a statement from the candidates concerning all or any of the proposed steps would be of timely interest to citizens and taxpayers "whose final rating of Philadelphia's next mayor will depend upon specific forward steps taken, specific things avoided, specific conditions corrected, specific needs neglected, specific opportunities realized."

A summary of the proposals and responses will define more clearly the outlook for municipal efficiency in Philadelphia as it appears to the Bureau of Municipal Research and to men whose responsibility and interest is the actual administration of the city's business. The statement submitted to the candidates was substantially as follows:

*What Philadelphia Expects of Her Next Mayor*

Philadelphia's expectations as regards her next mayor are unusually high, unusually definite, unusually exacting.

It goes without saying that Philadelphia expects her next mayor to give the city an "honest and businesslike" administration. But citizens are every day coming to see more clearly that "business-like administration" means a good deal more than meeting a few so-called "issues," in spectacular fashion; that it means solving, day in and day out, innumerable definite problems that call for clear knowledge, prompt decision and effective action, as well as public spirit and honest intentions.

Unrealized expectations mean a discredited next mayor. In fairness to her next mayor, therefore, and in the interest of her own clearness of vision, Philadelphia should formulate some statement of the community needs which she wishes to have met; of the specific things she wishes to have done or not to have done; of the specific tests which she proposes to apply to her mayor during the next four years.

As an agency of citizen inquiry and co-operation, the Bureau of Municipal Research emphasizes the obligation resting upon citi-

zens as well as upon officials to inform themselves promptly, regularly and accurately as to what acts are performed, what service rendered, what results accomplished, and what expense incurred; so that responsibility may be clearly fixed; economy, efficiency and fidelity encouraged; waste, inefficiency and dishonesty eliminated.

With this end in view, the Bureau of Municipal Research will use its resources to get facts, to locate defects, and to find the steps necessary to correct defects. It will place the results of its inquiry at the disposal of Philadelphia's next mayor, and endeavor to enlist the support of citizens and taxpayers in every step he takes toward economy and efficiency in the public service.

#### *Some Things Philadelphia's Next Mayor Must Do*

1. He must appoint five efficient or inefficient heads of departments to direct the operation of twenty-two bureaus and offices expending about \$23,000,000 annually.

2. He must enforce discipline, or encourage indifference among 7,000 city employees with a pay roll of \$8,500,000.

3. He must set the pace, determine the point of view and sense of responsibility of departmental officials and employees who will be quick to see the spirit and business methods that dominate the mayor's own office.

4. He must prescribe a high or a low standard of qualifications for officials and employees to be named by department heads for positions exempt from civil service regulations.

5. He must determine whether investigations by the mayor's bureau of contracts and statistics shall be thorough or superficial, partial or impartial, useful or useless; whether the results of such investigations shall be made public, or pigeonholed, and whether the findings shall be acted upon or ignored.

6. He must determine the secrecy or the publicity with which each city department conducts public business.

7. He must protect and strengthen, or neglect and weaken the city's credit.

8. He must determine the kind of evidence that he will require as basis for approving or disapproving specific items in the annual budget as passed by city councils.

9. He must determine the basis upon which he will approve or disapprove specific items in ordinances authorizing the issue of

bonds. (Bond issues amounted to \$5,000,000 in 1910 and \$12,650,902 in 1911.)

10. He must control or fail to control the content, distribution and cost of city advertising, for which \$104,524 is requested in the estimates for 1912.

11. He must determine whether the city shall be protected or defrauded in the purchase of real estate, by demanding or failing to demand appraisals by disinterested real estate experts, and other evidence as to value, fitness, urgency of need and availability of alternate sites.

12. He must expedite, ignore, or obstruct the work of the city controller looking toward a progressive revision of the city's business methods—including a reorganization of the accounting system, effective audit of bills against the city, and independent inspection of supplies, materials and work.

To the mayor, as the business head of the government, Philadelphia looks for intelligent direction of a community program, the heads of departments being his representatives in their several fields. Philadelphia, therefore, will not distinguish sharply between results which her next mayor can accomplish single-handed and those in which he will need the co-operation of other officials.

#### *Some Opportunities Open to Philadelphia's Next Mayor*

1. Provide that departmental estimates for annual appropriations be prepared and summarized as parts of a clearly defined community program, so formulated that citizens and taxpayers as well as councils may see what is proposed by the administration to meet community needs.

2. Afford full opportunity for discussion by citizens, civic organizations and the press, both before and after the action of councils, of the community program presented in the estimates.

3. Focus the attention of councils, executive officials and citizens upon the annual budget as a whole, as well as in detail, so that it may be looked upon as the embodiment of a definite program to be executed by the administration rather than as a mere aggregation of unrelated appropriation items.

4. Formulate plans which will enable the city to meet each year's expenses out of revenues, instead of financing expenses out of loans or handicapping the city by an accumulating deficit.

5. Devise and carry into effect, with modifications of law if necessary, a plan that will enable the city to make full provision at the beginning of each year for the total estimated expenses of the year, and to fix the tax rate, after such annual financial requirements have been determined, so that this rate will provide the exact amount of the authorized expenditures.

6. Include in the annual financial program of the city definite proposals for public improvements to be financed through loans, so that these may not be confused with current expenses.

7. Include in the city plan a comprehensive program for service affecting health, education, recreation and safety, as well as a constructive plan for material improvements.

8. Invite the co-operation of informed civic and charitable agencies in picturing the community's needs as a basis for formulating the annual budget.

9. Discourage the maintenance of unduly large city deposits in banks, and provide adequate safeguards for city deposits.

10. Assist the controller in every possible way in working out an effective system of accounts and records by which citizens, department heads, and the mayor himself may at all times have prompt, complete and accurate information concerning community needs met or not met, work done or not done, results produced and money spent.

11. Protect and strengthen the city's borrowing credit so that its bonds issued for land and permanent improvements may always be sold at the most favorable rates.

12. Promote the city's trading credit so that supplies, materials and equipment may be purchased to the greatest advantage.

13. Establish exact standards and specifications for supplies and materials to be purchased so that the city's agents and the public alike may know just what has been or is to be bought, at what advantage or disadvantage to the city.

14. Require that the department of supplies be organized and conducted as a highly efficient modern business enterprise, giving to the city the benefit of central buying; to departments the benefit of prompt action; and to dealers the benefit of prompt settlement and businesslike treatment in the city's purchase of \$3,000,000 of supplies annually.

15. Secure independent inspection, by a properly equipped

bureau under the city controller, of materials and supplies furnished to the city; of service rendered; and of construction work in progress.

16. Require the mayor's bureau of contracts and statistics not only to keep the mayor informed concerning the condition or completeness of work, but to study and to report systematically upon methods employed, expense incurred and results obtained; and to report systematically and promptly to city officials information needed for efficient administration.

17. Insist that all city contracts shall be drafted in language that will clearly set forth the respective rights of the contractor and the city; that will make possible little or no change in requirements set forth in the contracts; that will leave as few requirements as possible open to the discretion of department heads; and that will thus encourage the freest competition among bidders.

18. Promote the efficiency of city employees by working out an efficient system of selection, promotion and remuneration; and providing current records of work done and results accomplished that will not only encourage but protect each employee by enabling him to "make a record" for himself.

19. Enforce strictly the present civil service rules, or, so far as they are defective, secure their modification; and provide that the Civil Service Commission shall include in its annual report a complete roster of civil employees.

20. Increase the economy and efficiency in the public service by systematically studying organization, methods and results in each branch of the service, and providing the means whereby the city's business may be directed and controlled with the highest intelligence.

21. Plan for a bureau of licenses in which may be centralized the issue of all licenses and permits which are now handled in seven different offices.

22. Secure the proper publication of department reports; standardizing reports so that they may conform to the highest typographical, statistical and editorial requirements.

23. Extend the scope of the municipal journal "Philadelphia;" utilizing it as a means of bringing currently and promptly before officials, citizens and taxpayers a summary record of accomplishment, of work in progress, and of projected plans of every department of the public service.



24. Maintain a bureau of information in connection with the mayor's office through which citizens shall be encouraged to make inquiries, to submit complaints, and to propose improvements in the public service with assurance of prompt, intelligent and effective attention by the mayor.

25. Call a conference, at least once each year, with responsible city officials of neighboring cities in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware which affect or are affected by Philadelphia's policies relating to health and sanitation, transit facilities and public improvements.

Both of the candidates responded in practically the same vein, endorsing strongly the program proposed as a basis for municipal efficiency and economy. Three paragraphs from the reply of Mr. Blankenburg's letter show his thorough-going acceptance of the proposals:

"I know of no agency that can be of greater service to the next mayor of Philadelphia than the Bureau of Municipal Research. The interest which this body of men has taken in our municipality has always been a source of gratification to me. Bureaus of municipal research have proved of invaluable service to every city where they have been established; yours should be one of the mainstays of the new administration.

"Definite knowledge of problems and issues that may present themselves should, in my opinion, be gathered from reliable sources so that intelligent action may be possible. We should not undertake more than we can honestly accomplish. If elected, I shall welcome plans and suggestions for a great and better Philadelphia from your body and other organizations, as well as from private citizens; and shall give them not perfunctory, but earnest and effective consideration.

"Publicity is, perhaps, the greatest agent for good. The public is entitled to full knowledge of all the activities of the various city departments; the progress of work under consideration; the expenditures made and still contemplated."

On all sides there are evidences of a changing point of view and a new emphasis in the civic development of Philadelphia. A community program rather than a partisan program is more and more dominating the thought and action of citizens and taxpayers. Admin-

istrative machinery rather than political machines is being recognized as the means through which civic power may most effectively be applied. Intelligent methods of managing municipal activities rather than skillful methods of manipulating personal "pull," are being accepted as the effective means of getting the best out of municipal machinery. The obligations and opportunities of citizens and taxpayers are every day being interpreted in larger terms; and applied not merely to the few intense weeks immediately preceding an election, but to each of the 365 days of four years between elections, when citizens may ask questions, demand evidence, appraise results, and measure cost with specific reference to the administrative machinery and administrative methods employed in the promotion and protection of the community's health, education, recreation, convenience, business and general welfare.